

## **2<sup>nd</sup> SATS Partnering RFI Town Meeting**

Chamberlin Hotel, Hampton, VA – December 6, 2000

### **Meeting Purpose:**

The Federal Government Team held a 2<sup>nd</sup> SATS RFI Partnering Town Meeting to provide a forum for questions and answers regarding the formation of a single entity interface to implement the SATS Program leading up to demonstrations in calendar year 2003 and 2005.

Additionally, in response to feedback from the November 14, 2000 RFI Town Meeting, government-funded research about partnering models were presented by Paul Masson of STARNet. Paul also facilitated a dialogue on alliance formation with the participants present. The government team was not present during Paul's presentation nor alliance dialogue.

The Federal Government Team also shared with the participants FY 01 start up issues including participant feedback from the November 14 RFI Town meeting with respect to needing clarity on the SATS technical program and possible delays in the selection of the single partnering interface.

In response to the need for clarity on the SATS technical program, Mike Durham presented an outline for the SATS operational capabilities. Mike shared with the participants that the FAA is committed to support joint planning of SATS. Additionally, the SATS Team will be hosting two series of workshops in the late January (1/23 to 1/25) and late February time frame (2/21 to 2/23) to engage the technical and business communities in developing the functional requirements needed for demonstrating the SATS operational capabilities and also continuing the alliance formation and single entity interface dialogue among the business participants. Prior to the January Workshop, NASA will release a draft detailed technical plan on the SATS web site for review. (SATS web site: <http://sats.nasa.gov>).

The possible delay of the formation of the single partnering interface along with government costing constraints; the possibility of losing the ability to leverage FY 01 state infrastructure investment funding; and research timeline is forcing the SATS Program Office to look at alternative mechanisms to jump start the SATS research work. One possible alternative solution being considered is a NRA (NASA Research Announcement) for the design and initial implementation of the States SATS Lab Demonstrations.

The above summarized points are addressed in the Q & A below and in the Federal Government Presentation for December 6 (see SATS website).

## **RFI Q & A**

Paul Masson of STARNet Facilitated Questions and Answers.

Addressed four questions that were faxed in by the December 4 deadline.

### **Faxed Question#1:**

What is the process for identifying states to participate in a single-public-private program interface? Will they be specified?

### **Answer:**

NASA is seeking inputs on how the single interface can incorporate the states and academia in the SATS effort. The RFI specifically asks for these inputs.

### **Faxed Question #2:**

Will NASA define roles for the single-public-private program interface in regards to university participation, i.e., the General Armstrong initiative at Headquarters which is promoting increasing collaborations between NASA and university partners.

### **Answer:**

No. With respect to the General Armstrong Initiative, there is no new funding in FY 01. There are some proposed funding allocations in FY 02 earmarked for university activity. The General Aviation Program Office has proposed to NASA Headquarters some SATS-related research categories.

### **Faxed Question # 3:**

The RFI did not clarify non-technical SATS issues such as policy and economic issues in SATS implementation as defined on 11/14. For example: public policy support infrastructure development. Will this be clarified?

### **Answer:**

NASA is interested in its partners concerns with policy and economic issues in the implementation of the SATS program. The purpose of an RFI is to provide inputs on and identify issues with the SATS single entity interface's capabilities and partnering conditions

### **Faxed Question #4:**

Leveraging the resources of the NASA Space Grant and EPSCoR program seems to be key partnering opportunity. How can this be specified and managed?

### **Answer:**

Two points, first we are encouraging leveraging of this funding as well as possible state funding, however, if there are specific requirements for a 50/50 cost share any other fed funded activity could not be used as that cost share amount. There are Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines that define matching .

The following is a summary of the Q&A discussion raised at the December 6<sup>th</sup> SATS RFI Town Meeting.

**Question:** Does NASA envision that the partnering interface responding to an RFP and proposing they have an alliance formed of X-No. of different groups of states, industry and/ or universities would result in an alliance that would be closed to future membership?

**Answer:** NASA does not envision a closed partnership. Organizations may participate in some, none or all proposals.

**Question:** In the RFP solicitation, will there be a defined governance structure addressing allocation of federal monies to member organizations within the single partnering entity?

**Answer:** At this time NASA has not selected any specific organizational governance structure for the single partnering interface. We are interested in receiving your inputs.

**Question:** Who will have system design authority (systems architecture and form design)? Will NASA/FAA be doing this?

**Answer:** NASA brings expertise in technical integration of complex systems, but if NASA did this independently, it would defeat the collaborative process and it may have to be repeated once the single-entity is brought to the table.

**Question:** In NASA's 'Prove SATS Works' chart, a go/no go decision is identified at the end of FY 05. Is it NASA's intent to foster competitive development of technology to meet your goals, and do you have more than one path to meet your goal? Is the go/no go (post FY 05) actually a funding issue?

**Answer:** Understand that the outcome of the current program is not a deployable system. In the process of doing this research there should be a number of competitive processes that will lead to a prototype system demonstration in FY 05. Go/no go is not just a NASA decision. At the end of the FY 05 SATS demonstrations, the results must provide evidence that the SATS concept is technically and economically feasible, as well as consistent with public policy, to all the stakeholder groups to enable a national investment decision to develop a market-viable SATS system

**Question:** Does NASA expect the SPPPI to provide matching funds?

**Answer:** Depending on the mechanism selected there are financial matching requirements. NASA expects the single partnering interface through its member organizations to cost share federal investments. A 50/50 cost share is a stated condition for partnering that we would like your feedback on.

**Question:** Does the current NASA funding include the cost for changing certification for airspace/airports, etc?

**Answer:** No. NASA is funding a research program not a systems development and deployment program. There may be certifiable components developed by the partnership but NASA is funding the research and technology development.

**Question:** Will funding be provided by NASA for administrative support for structuring an alliance?

**Answer:** It is my understanding (Mike Durham), that administrative support would be an allowable cost for most business vehicles.

**Question:** How did NASA arrive at the SATS operation capabilities? Where are there documents I can refer to?

**Answer:** Refer to the he SATS website for background on SATS planning. See <http://sats.nasa.gov>.

**Question:** Is the single partnering interface limited to working the four SATS operation capabilities?

**Answer:** We are looking for a single-interface for a strategic engagement of its member organizations so we can do longer range planning initiatives as well as tactical management. The entity could go beyond the 4 operational capabilities described in NASA's legislative language using its own resources.

**Participant Comment:** Since the SATS Partnering Process has competitive issues, getting into technical discussions prior to selection will be very difficult to do. No one will risk providing input.

**NASA Comment:** The single-entity interface is a business entity that will have to manage technology development through its member organizations. The interface, itself is not expected to do the technical research and development.

**Question:** What does it mean to have a strawman of a technical plan?

**Answer:** The SATS Program draft technical plan will be posted on the SATS web site by January 16, 2001 . This plan will include element descriptions as we understand them today, Level I Program Milestones (presented here today) with the appropriate exit criteria and some description of the next level down milestones in terms of functional requirements and possible technology solution sets.

**Question:** How do you intend to accomplish the Technology Development? Will organizations compete for specific tasks?

**Answer:** NASA's concept is based on collaboration. The government seeks feedback as to whether this will work. There is a specific question in the RFI asking for input on what technical areas can be deemed pre-competitive and collaborative.

**Participant Comment:** It will be harder to foster competitive technologies and teams with a single interface.

**Participant Comment:** This program is interesting and similar to DARPA's Program on the development of the Internet: get best of competition and best of collaboration. Competition sharpens. Collaboration brings multiple talents together. The challenge is the balance and to structure a program that gets the best of both worlds and off-ramps where teams can continually be restructured for competition.

**Facilitator comment:** The SATS Team is seeking input on how to modify their RFP process for a partnering interface to maximize their stated programmatic goals. NASA is asking for feedback and distinct models in form of proposals on how to achieve the balance between competition and collaboration.

**Question:** Could NASA explain the SATS Program costing constraints for FY 01? How does the proposed NRA for the States SATS Lab Design and initial implementation fit in?

**Answer:** There are institutionalized policies within NASA as to how and when money has to be obligated and costed. There are specific percentage milestones that must be met throughout the fiscal year. At the November 14<sup>th</sup> RFI Meeting, considerable concern was expressed on the length of time to start up such an alliance, i.e., gain stakeholder buy-in. An estimated fourth quarter start-up date for the Alliance will not enable the program to meet NASA's financial milestones. The SATS Program Office is considering an alternative start-up for state partnerships to possibly do some SATS Lab start-up work. This would be work of a 1-year duration and would be integrated within the single partnering interface leading to the FY 05 demonstration. We are looking to pre-load some long lead time research tasks, not create a separate funding mechanism.

**Question:** Could Mike elaborate on the NRA activity that is under consideration?

**Answer:** Because of the feedback received from the Nov. 14 RFI session that it would take a long time to recruit stakeholders, the NRA activity is a proposed alternative solution to this feedback. If it is determined that the selection of a single partnering interface would not take as long, then we would reconsider the process.

The proposed NRA is a one-year proposed activity that is under management consideration. We wanted to disclose the possibility at this forum to obtain feedback on potential concerns and issues as it effects the single partnering interface process.. The NRA activity would be a broad solicitation, which could result in multiple awards. This is a very flexible solicitation mechanism. We are considering requesting proposals from state or regional/ multi-state partnerships (to include states, university, as many business entities as possible) for SATSLab design and early implementation. This NRA activity could leverage FY 01 state infrastructure investments and protect technology investment lead times. The solicitation and selection process can be implemented quickly (awarded approximately in the June 01 timeframe).

**Question:** Does the single partnering interface winner pickup where the NRA activity ends?

**Answer:** The NRA activity is expected to be a one-year effort.. At the end of that period, NASA's expectation is for the single partnering entity to integrate that activity into the partnering alliance.

**Question:** Will the results from the NRA activity be open? Disclosed to the public?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Will the NRA be more technical in nature or are the proposals for planning purposes only?

**Answer:** The predominant activity for this first year is actually systems engineering in nature. This work will provide the framework for making technical decisions for the FY 03 experiments. Additionally equipment investments need to be made now to prepare for the FY 03 experiments.

**Question:** Do you mean systems engineering and technical or business and alliance planning?

**Answer:** The NRA is not for business and alliance planning.

**Question:** Are you still sticking to the Partnering Solicitation schedule?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Can the participants provide responses electronically?

**Answer:** Yes, send to Gaudy Bezos-O'Connor's email address (g.m.bezos-oconnor@larc.nasa.gov) and she will forward to the appropriate procurement officer. Electronic responses must be received by 11:59 p.m. on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

A link to Gaudy's email address will be put on the SATS website by the morning of 12/08/00.

**Question:** What does it mean if a company doesn't respond?

**Answer:** There is not a legal binding issue relative to responding or not responding. The RFI input is an informal step to help the government position itself in the implementation of the next steps of the partnering process.

**NASA Requests:**

1. Please provide feedback on the proposed technical and partnering workshops. Identify issues and/or areas of concerns with the disclosure and discussions of the draft SATS technical program plan at the meetings.
2. Please provide Gaudy Bezos-O'Connor, the names and contact information for individuals who should be invited to the Jan/Feb technical and partnering workshops